

# ***Victims of Crime Service Standards and Definitions***

**Office of Crime Victims Advocacy  
Victims of Crime Program  
June 2009**



# Advisory Committee Members

*The Advisory Group was made up of individuals who represent each Crime Victim Service Center region, victim/survivors, and other experts working with victims of crime.*

Shannon Meyer, F.B.I.

Nikki Finkbonner, Lummi Nation

Patty Strange, Children's Home Society of Washington

Arwen Bird, Crime Survivors for Community Safety

Cindy Fulton, Community Member

Dave Johnson, Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates

Emma Catague, Community Voices, Asian Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety

Glenda Tanner, Community Voices, Proud African American Youth Society

Fanny Correa, Region One, Separation and Loss Services

Alan Lai, Region Two, Chinese Information and Service Center

Melissa Cilley, Region Three, Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Carla Hackett, Region Four, Families and Friends of Violent Crime Victims

Sherrie Tinoco, Region Five, Emergency Support Services

Courtney Langner, Region Five, Ethic Support Council

Cody Francis, Region Six, Family Crisis Network

JoDee Garretson, Region Seven, Sexual Assault Response Center

Ken Sterner, Region Eight, North Columbia County Action Council

Robin Jones, Region Nine, Domestic and Sexual Violence Crisis Center of Chelan and Douglas

Maria Verdin, Region Ten, Consejo Counseling and Referral

Dalya Perez, Region Eleven, Stonewall Youth

Holly Diaz, Region Twelve, Families and Friends of Violent Crime Victims

Martha Wescott, Region Thirteen, Kitsap Sexual Assault Center

**OCVA staff participants**

Bev Emery

Pearl Gipson-Collier

Anita Granbois

Chris Fenno

Grace Call

# Background

*The Washington State Strategic Plan for Victim Services outlines strategies for creating crime victim services that are high quality, culturally appropriate, and victim-centered.*

In July of 2005, the Washington State Strategic Plan for Victim Services was released. The Strategic Plan for Victim Services provides a framework to guide both public and private investment in services for victims of crime, such as assault, robbery, child abuse, vehicular assault, vehicular homicide, property crime, trafficking, hate crimes, kidnapping, and survivors of homicide victims. The Plan has been developed with input from victims of crime, law enforcement, the courts, the corrections system, and both system-based and community-based victim service providers.

The Plan is built upon the underlying belief that all crime victims should have access to high quality, culturally appropriate, victim-centered services. To achieve this, it is necessary to support and facilitate the development of services that are accessible, effective, and victim-centered for all crime victims.

This Plan outlined numerous outcomes and strategies to be implemented by the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy. Specifically, these outcomes were:

- Comprehensive services are available for all victims of crime
- Standards for victim service providers are developed and implemented
- All victims of crime have access to information about rights and resources
- Culturally appropriate services are available for victims of crime in marginalized or underreported groups.

In order to ensure that comprehensive service are available for all victims of crime, the Plan further recommended the creation of Crime Victim Service Centers (CVSC). A CVSC is envisioned as a coalition of service providers who link resources to make comprehensive, culturally appropriate services available to crime victims statewide. The Center is not necessarily a physical location. Instead, it is a collaborative effort among service providers to provide comprehensive services to victims of all crimes.

# Executive Summary

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) serves as a voice within government for the needs of crime victims in Washington State. OCVA's philosophy is that it is in the best interest of all citizens of Washington State that victims of crime are provided the opportunities and resources necessary to recover and return to being productive, contributing members of the community. As a funding agency, it is our responsibility to work with service providers and experts statewide to develop and implement service standards and definitions to ensure high-quality, accessible, and appropriate services to all victims of crime in Washington.

In May 2006, OCVA assembled an advisory group that was tasked with creating service standards and definitions for victim advocates and volunteers working with victims of assault, burglary, child abuse, drunk and drugged driving, homicide, identity theft, trafficking, hate crimes, kidnapping, property crimes, and others.

## Victim-Centered

It cannot be said enough that all services to victims of crime must be victim-centered, culturally appropriate, and accessible. The words “victim-centered, culturally appropriate, and accessible” are the mantra and philosophy that feed **each** service standard and definition. At the root of each service definition is accessibility and appropriateness for every individual we work with. At the heart of every service is an approach that is victim-centered.

When services are victim-centered, the victim's needs take precedent over any system needs. Services are specific, focused, and driven by the individuals impacted by crime and violence.

# Culturally Appropriate and Accessible

Historically, individuals and groups of people have experienced a lack of access to systems and institutions established to provide services and resources. It is the intent that victims of crime in Washington have access to equitable, culturally competent, and linguistically appropriate services. OCVA seeks to support the provision of services for victims from marginalized communities that are provided by community members and organizations who work with and represent marginalized communities.

When services are culturally appropriate and accessible, those working with victims of crime are aware of cultural, individual, and role differences including those related to race/ethnicity, language, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, (dis)Ability, social class, economic status, education, marital status, religious affiliation, residency, and HIV status. We try to identify our own biases and to limit the effect of these biases on our work. We do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices. Advocates and volunteers value justice and equity in service provision and use initiative and commitment to ensure that services are extended to populations in need. Victim service providers use flexibility, innovation, and persistence to promote fair access and benefits of service—no matter the barriers and challenges that must be addressed and overcome to achieve this.\*

A coordinated community response to victims of crime includes meaningful contributions from individuals, organizations, and agencies representing different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. Leaders in the victims of crime movement will constantly assess group participation levels and ask, “Whose voice is missing from our table?”

---

\* DeHart, D.D. (2003) *National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium: Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers*. Columbia, SC: Center for Child and Family Studies, University of South Carolina.

# Availability of Services

It is the expectation of OCVA that every victim of crime have access to information and referral, crisis intervention, and all advocacy services twenty-four hours a day through a Crime Victim Service Center. While some services may be delivered over the telephone, it is an expectation that during regular hours of operation in-person services will be available.

## Qualifications

*The course will build advocacy skills and provide tools for professionals and volunteers who work with victims of crime.*

### Summary

Each individual working with victims of crime must complete the training requirements as described below in order to perform services as defined in these standards.

### 30 Hour Pre-Service Advocacy Course

The 30 Hour Pre-Service Advocacy Training must be completed before a staff member or volunteer responds to a victim of crime. The course may contain content adapted from the: *OCVA Advocacy Curriculum, 2006 General Crimes Advocate Training, Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers* (National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium), and other curriculum, articles, research, and experience-based information. This content will focus on the fundamental skills of advocacy and working with victims of crime, saving crime-specific advocacy tips and other advanced topics for training during the first year of service.

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy will contract with the Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates to coordinate this required training regularly and regionally.

Graduating from the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy's State Victims Assistance Academy satisfies the requirement for the 30 Hour Pre-Service Advocacy Course.

This course consists of 30 hours of classroom learning. These 30 hours include the following cluster topics:

***Victimology/Empowerment (4 hours)***

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Victim trauma, grief, and loss
- Re-victimization

***Advocacy (3 hours)***

- Definition of advocacy
- Philosophy of advocacy
- History of victim's movement
- Victim's state and federal rights

***Values Clarification (3 hours)***

- Confidentiality
- Privilege
- Victim assistance ethics
- Outreach and social change advocacy

***Cultural Competency (3 hours)***

- Individual biases
- Anti-oppression
- Barriers to access

***Listening Skills (4 hours)***

- Active listening skills
- Communication skills
- Modes of communication

***Crisis Intervention (4 hours)***

- Definition of crisis
- Signs and symptoms of crisis
- Appropriate interventions

***Resources (3 hours)***

- Overview of the community's victim service programs
- Current state of the victims' movement
- Accessing resources
- Compensation, restitution, and civil reparations



***Legal Justice Systems (4 hours)***

- System limits and expectations
- Victim notification
- Sentencing guidelines
- Criminal legal system
- Civil legal system
- Tribal justice systems
- Juvenile legal systems
- Federal justice system
- Immigration system
- Medical and healthcare systems

***Secondary Trauma (2 hours)***

- Boundaries
- Burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma

**10 Hours Training in First Year of Service**

An additional 10 hours of training in the first year (based on anniversary date of hire) is required of all staff and volunteers providing direct services. This requirement is flexible enough so that each organization can build the first year of service training hours to meet the specific regional crime victim needs. It is expected that more than one topic will be covered in the 10 hours of training. The topics covered must contain learning objectives and include specific skill building and knowledge based tools relating to working with victims of crime. As a grant requirement, organization staff will be required to outline a training plan for staff and volunteers. Each organization receiving funds from OCVA to serve victims of crime will also be required to allocate money in their budget to meet this requirement.

The 10 hours of classroom training in the first year of service may be provided on a local organizational or regional basis. Articles, books, training manuals, videos, and web-based training that are specifically focused on service delivery to victims of crime may be used to satisfy 50% of the required 10 hours of training. The remaining 5 hours of training are expected to be satisfied through in person, classroom training or conferences.

The 10 hours of classroom training in the first year of service may include:

- Arson
- Burglary
- Fraud
- Identity Theft
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Elder Abuse
- Kidnapping/Missing Persons
- Trafficking
- Assault
- Homicide
- Robbery
- Hate and Bias Crimes
- Gang Violence
- Death Notification

## **12 Hours of Continuing Education**

After the first year of service, staff and volunteers are required to complete 12 hours of continued education through state, local, national, or regional trainings related to victims of crime. Each year of services is based on the anniversary date of hire. Articles, books, training manuals, videos, and web-based training that are specifically focused on service delivery to victims of crime may be used to satisfy 50% of the required 12 hours of continuing education. The remaining 6 hours of training are expected to be satisfied through in person, classroom training or conferences.

## **~~Training Requirements for Supervisors~~**

This training is not available currently and is not a requirement for supervisors currently.

~~Individuals supervising advocates or volunteers must have two years of direct advocacy service experience. In addition, a supervisor must participate in a six-hour OCVA training specifically designed for those supervising victims of crime staff and volunteers.~~

## **Requirements for Therapists**

Individuals providing therapy services as defined in this document must be licensed psychiatrists or psychologists or be registered or certified professionals in the State of Washington and have a minimum of a master's degree in one or more of the following: mental health counseling, marriage, and family therapy, social

work, or related field. Practitioners who are completing an internship for a master's degree in any of the fields listed above and have completed the ten hours of victims of crime training are also eligible providers, as long as they are receiving supervision from a person who meets the qualifications above. Therapists, as well as individuals conducting assessments, must have regular supervision, consultation and/or review of cases, preferably by a Washington State licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, or certified therapist.

Therapists must also complete the 10 hours of training specific to working with crime victims, trauma, grief, or loss annually, including the first year of providing services.

### **Training for Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Assault Advocates**

Staff and volunteers who are already trained as domestic violence or sexual assault advocates and who wish to work with victims of assault, burglary, child abuse, drunk and drugged driving, homicide, identity theft, trafficking, hate crimes, kidnapping, property crimes, and others will need to complete the 10 hours training in the first year of service as explained in this document. After the first year of service, they are required to meet the continuing education requirements.

## ADDENDUM

June 2009

### TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The following are categories of training which can clearly count toward continuing education hours. In most cases, OCVA Victims of Crime staff won't have any questions about these trainings. If a training doesn't fit neatly into one of these categories, OCVA Victims of Crime staff may request additional information regarding how the training informed your CVSC program work:

- Category 1: Trainings specifically on the crimes listed on page 9 of the Victims of Crime Service Standards and Definitions.

• Arson	• Burglary
• Fraud	• Identity Theft
• Child Abuse and Neglect	• Elder Abuse
• Kidnapping/Missing Persons	• Trafficking
• Assault	• Homicide
• Robbery	• Hate and Bias Crimes
• Gang Violence	• Death Notification

- Category 2 Any training provided by the Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates (WCCVA), or the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA). This includes the OCVA State Victims Assistance Academy (Chelan 2008, or Yakima 2009) or the OCVA Advocacy Trainings.
- Category 3 Any training to improve the specific skills necessary to carry out a primary job function for your CVSC program.
  - Examples: supervisor trainings for CVSC supervisors or volunteer management trainings for CVSC volunteer managers.

- Category 4 Training to help you understand how to help your CVSC clients access and navigate crime-related systems and services.
  - Examples: training on the Crime Victims Compensation program, the criminal or civil justice systems, assistance for low-income people, assistance provided by other social service, Tribal, or government entities, etc.

This also includes improving communication, relationships, and other skills used when working with other professionals to serve CVSC clients.

  - Examples of these professionals: law enforcement, Tribes, prosecutors, therapists, interpreters, etc.
- Category 5 Training about working with specific individuals and communities you assist through your CVSC work. These might include individuals who are: Native American, children, elders/elderly, homeless, living with disability(ies), gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/queer (GLBTQ), deaf, limited English speaking, immigrants, living with mental illness, and/or members of historically marginalized communities etc.

### **Other Considerations**

If any training is provided by a DV or SA agency, or has domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking in the title, OCVA staff may request additional information regarding how the training informed your CVSC program work.

If a training teaches skills specific to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking service provision, the training cannot be used for CVSC training hours.

---

---

## **Crime Victim Service Center**

### **Definition**

A Crime Victim Service Center is a coalition of service providers who link resources to make comprehensive, culturally appropriate services available to crime victims within each region of the state. The Crime Victim Service Center ensures the availability of both immediate and sustained support for adult, child, and juvenile victims of assault, burglary, child abuse, drunk and drugged driving, homicide, identity theft, trafficking, hate crimes, kidnapping, property crimes, and others.

The Center may not be a physical location. Instead it may be a collaborative effort among service providers within a region to provide comprehensive victims services to victims of crimes. The idea behind calling these collaborative relationships a Center is to build an identity and structure for service delivery to crime victims.

### **Goal**

Provide comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and accessible services to victims of assault, burglary, child abuse, drunk and drugged driving, homicide, identity theft, trafficking, hate crimes, kidnapping, property crimes, and others.

### **Rationale**

- It is more desirable for Washington to have services in all regions of the state, for all types of crime, than to provide in-depth services for certain types of crime, in certain areas of the state.
- The regional concept provides an infrastructure to deliver services for victims of all crime.
- The regional concept encompasses the values of continuity, preserving resources within a community, and providing predictable funding.

### **Funding and distribution of available resources**

- Initial funding will come from federal VOCA funds allocated for services to general crime victims with a goal of increasing available funds to meet identified needs.

- Funds will be distributed using a formula that assigns a base amount to each region along with an add-on amount that takes into consideration population and geographic area.
- To the extent possible, regional boundaries will follow existing collaborative and working relationships among service providers and will consider the benefits and challenges of including urban population centers and rural areas within a region.

### **Activities**

- Crisis Intervention (page 14)
- Information and Referral (page 17)
- Advocacy (page 16)
- Legal Advocacy (page 19)
- Medical advocacy (page 20)
- Outreach and Awareness (page 18)

### **Availability of Services**

The Crime Victim Service Center must ensure that crisis intervention, information and referral, advocacy, legal advocacy, and medical advocacy are available 24 hours a day seven days a week. While some services may be delivered over the telephone, it is an expectation that during regular hours of operation in person services will be available. Likewise, it is the expectation that medical advocacy will be in person.

---

## **Community Organizing**

### **Definition**

Culturally and linguistically appropriate activities by marginalized communities to promote attitudes, behaviors and social conditions that will reduce or eliminate factors that cause or contribute to violence and/or crime in marginalized communities.

### **Goal**

Increase the willingness and capacity of the community to address the underlying causes of violence and/or crime and respond to victims and others impacted by violence and/or crime.

### **Activities**

- Community events focused on raising awareness of criminal victimization, its underlying conditions, available services for the community, and potential service recipients and interrelated systems
  - Public speaking/presentations within the community focused on raising awareness of criminal victimization, its underlying conditions, available services for the community, and potential service recipients and interrelated systems
  - Development and distribution of materials focused on raising awareness of criminal victimization, its underlying conditions, available services for the community, and potential service recipients and interrelated systems
-



---

## **Community Outreach**

### **Definition**

An intentional process of organizations created by and for marginalized populations reaching out, contacting, engaging, and involving individuals and communities in order to increase access to services for victims of crime by organizations created by and for marginalized populations.

### **Goal**

Outreach is specifically designed by and for marginalized populations to ensure equitable and culturally relevant access to services that support individuals in recovery from victimization.

### **Activities**

- Community events
  - Relationship building
  - Developing partnerships
  - Provide information on existing service delivery
-

---

## **Community Responding**

### **Definition**

Culturally and linguistically appropriate personal support and/or assistance in accessing services and addressing violence and/or crime related issues by marginalized communities for victims and others impacted by violence and/or crime in marginalized communities.

### **Goal**

Ensure access to services and support that enhances recovery from violence and/or crime.

### **Activities**

- Assess the effects of crime with an individual
  - Provide appropriate healing techniques to respond to the effects of crime
  - Support Groups with a primary focus on victim issues
  - Educational Groups with a primary focus on victim issues
-

---

## ***Crisis Intervention***

### **Definition**

A personal response to an individual impacted by crime, provided in a variety of settings.

### **Goal**

Alleviate acute distress resulting from the impact of a crime, to begin stabilization, and assist in determining the next steps.

### **Activities**

- Assess immediate needs and concerns
  - Facilitate emotional stabilization
  - Provide information regarding resources and referrals
  - Help victim identify and plan the next steps
-

---

## ***Emergency Financial Assistance***

### **Definition**

Providing short-term, immediate funds to crime victims.

### **Goal**

Provide emergency financial assistance for victims of crimes who, as a result of the crime, have no other resources available to meet basic needs for health and safety.

### **Activities**

- Provide financial assistance for emergency needs resulting from the crime when no other resources are available. (Emergency needs can include but are not limited to, emergency shelter, telephone card, lock replacement, window replacement or cover up, food, clothing, transportation, gas voucher, short-term nursing home shelter for elder abuse victims, and costs related to crime scene clean-up).

---

## **Advocacy**

### **Definition**

Personal support and/or assistance with issues resulting from victimization.

### **Goal**

Ensure adequate support to enhance recovery from victimization and/or reduce the risk of re-victimization.

### **Activities**

- Ongoing personal support, including outreach calls and/or visits
  - Assistance in obtaining services to enhance healing and recovery
  - Advocating for victim choices and rights with individuals and service providers
  - Speaking on behalf of victims if requested or needed
  - Assistance in obtaining benefits or restoring basic needs
  - Assist caller/client in identifying and prioritizing the emergency needs
-

---

## ***Information and Referral***

### **Definition**

Connecting victims of crime and others impacted by violence and/or crime to appropriate resources.

### **Goal**

Respond, as appropriate, to requests for information, assistance, and/or referrals related to crimes specific to the individual's needs.

### **Activities**

- Assist caller/client in identifying and prioritizing what is needed
  - Provide information about available resources/services
  - Provide referrals to appropriate resources/services
-

---

## ***Outreach and Awareness***

### **Definition**

Provide information and knowledge about violence, crime victimization, and available services.

### **Goal**

Increase the community's ability to respond to violence and crime victimization, access services, and improve community safety.

### **Activities**

- Outreach with emphasis on underserved and marginalized communities
  - Community education events
  - Public speaking/presentations
  - Distribution of materials
  - Development of curricula, training materials, and educational tools
-

---

## ***Legal Advocacy***

### **Definition**

Personal support and assistance with victims of crime to ensure their interests are represented and their rights upheld within the civil and criminal justice systems.

### **Goal**

Educate and assist victims in navigating the civil and criminal justice systems; assist victims in evaluating advantages and disadvantages of participating in legal processes; facilitate victims' access and participation in the legal systems; and promote victims' choices and rights to individuals within the legal system.

### **Activities**

- Assert and advance a victim's choices and rights
  - Provide assistance in making informed choices and decisions about police reporting
  - Provide information about the local, state, federal and tribal justice systems, civil remedies, and victim rights
  - Provide support during investigative and legal processes
  - Actively monitor case through the legal system
  - Provide assistance in obtaining criminal and civil orders
  - Provide information about civil remedies
  - Provide information and advocacy related to immigration status
  - Provide referrals to legal resources as appropriate
-



---

## ***Medical Advocacy***

### **Definition**

Personal support and assistance for victims of crime to ensure healthcare needs are addressed and rights are upheld.

### **Goal**

Assist victims to regain personal power and control in making decisions regarding medical care and to promote an appropriate response from individual service providers.

### **Activities**

- Assert and advance a victim's choices and rights
  - Provide support in obtaining health related information and care
  - Provide assistance in making informed decisions about medical procedures for the purpose of collection and preservation of evidence
  - Provide support at medical exams and appointments
  - Provide information and assistance in obtaining relevant benefits
-

---

## ***Support Group***

### **Definition**

Regularly scheduled meetings of victims of crime and/or others impacted by crime.

### **Goal**

Promote emotional stability, education, and support to assist in recovery from crime victimization.

### **Activities**

- Intake and ongoing assessment for participation
  - Facilitation of group
  - Curriculum development and evaluation
  - Consultation for facilitators
-

---

## ***Therapy***

### **Definition**

Treatment provided by a mental health professional for victims and/or others impacted by crime.

### **Goal**

Promote healthy coping strategies, healing, and recovery subsequent to victimization.

### **Activities**

- Intake and ongoing assessment for participation
  - Treatment session(s) with individuals, groups and/or families
  - Consultation with other service providers about a specific client
  - Develop a treatment plan
-

---

## **System Coordination**

### **Definition**

Developing collaborative relationships and partnerships with entities to better meet the needs of crime victims.

### **Goal**

Promote coordination and collaboration, in order to improve the effectiveness of institutions, systems, and services for crime victims.

### **Activities**

- Develop and maintain partnerships
  - Participate in the development of policy
  - Participate in task forces, committees, work groups
  - Create and maintain collaborative relationships
  - Foster cooperation
  - Develop new ways of delivering services
  - Strategize to leverage existing/available resources
  - Assess and work to address gaps in services
-

---

## **Prevention**

*Further exploration of harm reduction can be found at:*

*[www.harmreduction.org](http://www.harmreduction.org)*

*You may also find information about primary prevention strategies (although not specific to this particular group of crime victims) at:*

*<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/DELTA/default.htm>*

## **Definition**

Strengthening the ability of individuals and communities to eliminate violence.

## **Goal**

Increase awareness, skill building, and safety within individuals and communities to prevent violence and crimes.

## **Activities**

- Provide information and education regarding personal and community safety planning
  - Teaching skills to promote non-violent behavior
  - Community education
  - Harm reduction
  - Risk reduction
  - Primary prevention
  - Community mobilization to change the social norms that promote and/or contribute to crime
-